

CALFED BAY-DELTA WATERSHED PROGRAM

BDAC Watershed Work Group Meeting Summary

Meeting Date: Friday, March 17, 2000

Meeting Location: Jones & Stokes
2600 V Street
Sacramento, CA

Meeting Attendees: See Attachment A

Introductions

Robert Meacher (Work Group Co-chair) began the meeting with introductions of the meeting participants and a review of the agenda. A list of attendees (Attachment A) and meeting handouts (Attachment B) is included.

Watershed Program Implementation Proposal Update

John Lowrie, Watershed Program Manager, provided a brief update on the Watershed Program Implementation Proposal. At the February Work Group meeting, a draft document entitled "Proposed Implementation of CALFED's Watershed Program" was distributed and discussed. The Watershed Program staff revised the document based on the comments and recommendations received at the February meeting. The revised document was then presented to the CALFED program managers for review. Mr. Lowrie explained that the Watershed Program has the support of the CALFED program managers and Steve Ritchie, Acting Executive Director, to move forward with the proposal. It is expected that some money from fiscal year 2000 (FY 2000) funds will be allocated to the Watershed Program this year to implement the proposal. Efforts to develop a simple, user-friendly Request for Proposal package (RFP) will begin shortly. The RFP may place a cap on a maximum amount for projects in order to spread the available funds around.

Discussion

A meeting participant gave strong support to the approach of limiting the amount for projects in the RFP process - one \$1 million project would not meet the needs of the Watershed Program.

A question was raised regarding the level of involvement that the Work Group would have in the decision-making process for selecting projects. It is highly likely that some of the Work Group members will be applying for money from the Watershed Program which may cause a conflict of interest. A meeting participant commented that in the first round of Proposition 204 funding, many stakeholders were involved in the development of the process. These stakeholders committed to refraining from the grant application during the first year, but were able to apply for funds the following year. The stakeholders felt it was important that they help develop the process rather than apply for funds the first year. Another meeting participant suggested that it would be appropriate to have the Work Group develop the general guidelines

and criteria; however, when the process becomes more specific a different group of individuals - without a conflict of interest - should step in. Mr. Lowrie stated that he would have a representative from the Attorney General's office come speak to the Work Group about the situation. The Attorney General's office can explain the regulations to the Work Group. We can then devise a process based on that information.

CALFED's Community Outreach Efforts

Valerie Holcomb presented an overview of CALFED's community outreach efforts. Since the release of the Draft Programmatic EIS/EIR in June 1999, 15 public hearings have been held throughout the state. Thousands of individuals have provided comments to CALFED. Ms. Holcomb added that although many people know about CALFED, there are a lot more who could learn about the Program.

The CALFED website is also seeing a lot of use (<http://calfed.ca.gov>). The layout of the website has intentionally been left graphic-free because not everyone has top technology in computers. The graphic-free layout enables the user to navigate around the website in an expeditious and easy fashion. A 25-minute video presenting an overview of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program has also been developed. In addition, a variety of fact sheets have been developed including: Program Overview; Commonly Asked Questions; Facts about the Bay-Delta System; Key Milestones; among others. The Program Overview fact sheet is also available in other languages including Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Japanese, and Vietnamese.

Other community outreach tools include a bi-monthly newsletter. Each edition focuses on a different program element. The newsletters can also be viewed on the CALFED website. In order to provide an update to the public regarding restoration projects, a 1999 annual report entitled "Restoring the Environment" was produced. This document was also presented to Congress members and legislators. In September 1999, a condensed version (25-page summary) of the entire Draft Programmatic EIS/EIR was developed to help the public understand the key elements of the Program.

Ms. Holcomb explained that CALFED's Public Outreach department has specifically reached out to local elected officials, local planning departments, city and county representatives, and local government. Information packets have also been distributed to the top 100 cities in the Bay-Delta basin and San Joaquin Valley. Ms. Holcomb also attends a variety of local public interest group meetings when invited to answer questions and put a face to this very large program.

Discussion

A meeting participant asked what the status was with the Record of Decision (ROD). Ms. Holcomb replied that the final documents were originally expected to be released in early April 2000. However, with discussions going on with top state and federal officials the schedule has been delayed by a minimum of 30 days and possibly up to 60 days. When the final documents become ready they will be available in three formats: hard copy, compact disk, or via the CALFED website. The final documents will include transcripts of the hearings and responses to comments which will add about 1,500 new pages to the package.

A meeting attendee asked Ms. Holcomb how the reader will know what information is new compared to the June 1999 documents. She replied that the impact analysis and implementation

plan will present new information, as well as the governance strategy, finance plan, and Stage I actions. Mr. Lowrie added that there will not be a lot of changes, but there will be some significant changes. Another meeting participant suggested that as an outreach effort, it would be helpful to have the new information highlighted for the reader. Ms. Holcomb stated that any changes related to a comment will be noted.

A Work Group member commented that although the CALFED website was good in general, it is lacking current meeting information. This information is important to the public and needs to be updated regularly.

Developing an Outreach Element for the Watershed Program

Mr. Lowrie began this discussion with an announcement that the Watershed Program staff has teamed up with the Resources Agency to develop a brochure on the benefits of using a watershed approach. The intent of the brochure is to “drive the point home” to Congress members, legislators, and government representatives. The brochure will include many graphics and pictures along with “real-world” examples.

Discussion

A meeting participant stated that there seems to be a real reluctance in adopting a watershed approach because watershed groups and consensus building can be a slow process, and dealing with stakeholders can be cumbersome. In an environment where people want to get things done - and done fast, the watershed approach is not well received by some. However, this brochure should illustrate the enormous benefits that come from taking this approach. Although it may be a slow process, by embracing the broad involvement of stakeholders this approach can strengthen a sense of community, reduce conflicts, and ultimately, improve the likelihood of plan implementation and sustaining long-term environmental improvements. This message needs to be communicated in the brochure.

A comment was made that what is needed is a change in mentality of the agencies. The reluctance in partnering with local communities needs to be overcome.

Another meeting participant stated that it is true that utilizing a true watershed approach is a slow process. A paradigm shift is needed. We are all much better off if we “front load” the process and get people on board early on, and agree on the project and process early on. Consensus building is a critical process and is very necessary.

A meeting attendee suggested that the developers of the brochure put themselves in the reader’s shoes and ask - Why should I care? and How will this affect me? This process is very fluid and most agency representatives do not think like that. Approach the brochure from an agency’s standpoint. Other meeting participants added that the brochure needs to explain how using this process will help the reader/agency get what they need to get done. Tell the reader “what’s in it for them.”

A Work Group member stated that some projects do not require a significant amount of public input - the construction of a fish screen, for example. However, CALFED and others need to recognize that it will be impossible to use the same approach for fish screens as for TMDLs and other watershed-wide projects. We need to start building the infrastructure now so when CALFED starts moving into implementation the foundation will be there.

Nina Gordon of the Resources Agency added that by providing real-life, tangible examples we will be able to better illustrate this somewhat nebulous approach. A Work Group member added that the brochure needs to emphasize watershed *management* not projects, and illustrate the capacity for making better decisions.

A suggestion was made to show quantifiable benefits in the brochure and universal aspects that can be applied in any watershed.

Mr. Lowrie asked the Work Group members to contact him if they would like to share any examples for the watershed brochure. Mr. Lowrie can be contacted at lowrie@water.ca.gov or 916/653-5422.

Watershed Updates

Watershed Legislation

Laurel Ames (Executive Director of Sierra Nevada Alliance) and Steve Fitch (Office of Assembly Member Dickerson) updated the Work Group on Assembly Bill 1948. The bill was introduced by Assembly Member Dickerson on February 15, 2000. The bill would require the Resources Agency to compile a report detailing all funding sources for watershed projects within the state since 1990, listing the name of the project and requesting entity, evaluating the success of the project, and providing information on the process for obtaining that funding. Public hearings to receive feedback on the legislation are expected to be held in mid-April. A couple of meeting attendees expressed concern over the review of the “success” of watershed projects. This may be problematic because most of the projects that had been funded in the past did not require a monitoring program; therefore, results would not necessarily be available. A meeting attendee added that if the study bill considers projects with no monitoring as an assumed failure, the results would prove that watershed restoration was a waste of money - when really the failure would be on the part of federal and state agencies to fund monitoring.

Ms. Ames also announced that Assembly Bill 2117 (introduced by Assembly Member Wayne) will be heard by the Assembly Natural Resources committee in April.

Urban Streams Restoration Program

Sara Denzler announced that the Urban Streams Restoration Program has received \$750,000 in River Parkway Program funds to spend immediately for urban stream projects. The Department of Water Resources is therefore holding an expedited application cycle to award grants of up to \$200,000. Priority will be given to projects that meet the application criteria, are part of existing or proposed river/stream parkways, and can be implemented by fall 2001. Deadline for applications is April 18, 2000. The Program will offer a second application cycle in fall 2000 to make available the first round of the \$25 million included in Proposition 13 for urban stream projects. The grant cap for the fall 2000 application cycle will also be \$200,000 per project. Contact Sara Denzler at sdenzler@water.ca.gov for additional information or view the website at http://www.dpla.water.ca.gov/urban_streams.html.

Watershed Conferences

Julie Tupper announced that the U.S. Forest Service will be hosting a watershed conference at the Konocti Harbor on Clear Lake on April 25 and 26, 2000. The conference is a federal forum entitled “Working Across Boundaries.” The public is encouraged to attend. Contact Julie Tupper for more information at jtupper/r5_fire@fs.fed.us.

Conner Everts announced that a conference entitled “From Drain to Dream III: Water Quality Issues and the Clean Water Act Explored” is taking place on Saturday, April 15, 2000, at the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power Auditorium. Contact Conner Everts for additional information at connere@west.net.

Watershed Program Webpage

Mr. Lowrie explained that a webpage for the Watershed Program is currently being developed. Susan Davis (Jones & Stokes) presented the webpage on a large screen for the meeting participants. The webpage will include Work Group meeting information, meeting summaries, list of Work Group members, information on watershed legislation, and other information pertaining to the Watershed Program and Work Group. In addition, a bulletin board is currently being created. It is the hope of the Watershed Program to use the bulletin board to gain feedback on work products, share information with and among stakeholders, and provide a forum for stakeholders to express their comments regarding the Watershed Program.

Local Watershed Presentation

Cache Creek

Jan Lowrey, Executive Director of the Cache Creek Conservancy, presented an overview of the Cache Creek watershed. The Cache Creek Conservancy was created in 1995 to implement the Coordinated Resource Management Plan which was developed by Yolo County for a 14-mile stretch of Cache Creek below Capay Dam. Mr. Lowrey presented a slide show of the watershed and discussed the key issues in the basin.

Cache Creek has three main sources of water: Clear Lake, Indian Reservoir, and Bear Creek. Cache Creek is used for irrigation and has high flows in the summer and flashy events in the winter and spring. The watershed is plagued with tamarisk and to a lesser degree, arundo. The creek is also listed as an impaired waterbody on the 303(d) list for mercury. Cache Creek stems from Clear Lake and then flows through a deep canyon until it reaches the agriculture communities in Capay Valley. The area below the town of Capay and the Capay Dam, an air-filled rubber dam, has been mined for 75 years. In 1996, instream mining was ceased. The Cache Creek Conservancy receives \$.05 for each ton of gravel that is mined. Further downstream, the channel becomes more and more choked with tamarisk. The terminus of Cache Creek is a settling basin which is surrounded by levees in the Yolo Bypass.

Mr. Lowrey presented some slides on a variety of projects that the Cache Creek Conservancy has implemented since 1995 including the restoration of an abandoned gravel mining pit and an erosion control effort using rice straw bales. More recently, the Cache Creek Conservancy has been focusing on a 130-acre parcel that was donated by Yolo County. The parcel, called the Cache Creek Nature Preserve, includes a historic barn illustrating farm history, an oak savannah, and a wetlands area which was created from an abandoned gravel mining pit. The Nature Preserve will be used for educational purposes targeted at grades 6-9 on a guided basis.

The Cache Creek Conservancy is also focusing their efforts on tamarisk removal. Eradication measures have already begun at the Nature Preserve. More recently, Cache Creek was chosen as a demonstration watershed to implement a biocontrol project to control tamarisk.

For additional information on Cache Creek or the Cache Creek Conservancy please contact Jan Lowrey at 530/661-1070.

Union School Slough Watershed Improvement Program

Judy Boshoven, Watershed Coordinator, presented an overview and slide show of the Union School Slough Watershed Improvement Program. This project is a joint effort by the Yolo County Resource Conservation District and the Audubon Society. The project stems from the 1996 Willow Slough Watershed Integrated Resources Management Plan which was developed by the Yolo County Resource Conservation District and Jones & Stokes. The project team received grants from CALFED and the EPA 319(h) Program which will allow for implementation of the recommendations for the Union School Slough watershed, a sub-watershed of Willow Slough. The Union School Slough encompasses 30 square miles of rangeland and agricultural land. The slough itself is 18 miles in length. There are 70 landowners in the watershed.

The primary objectives of the project are to provide technical and financial assistance to individual landowners in the Union School Slough watershed who wish to implement one or more conservation activities on their land. It is also intended to provide coordination and communication among landowners in the watershed, and organizations and agencies that may be able to provide assistance. Natural resource objectives of the project include:

- maintain and enhance the physical and economic conditions for agriculture;
- decrease the cost of vegetation maintenance along canals;
- minimize erosion and topsoil loss;
- improve water quality;
- improve the quantity and quality of wildlife habitat;
- decrease problems associated with flooding; and
- increase groundwater recharge.

The 1998 CALFED grant provided funding for 2 staff people - a watershed coordinator and a restoration ecologist, as well as implementation of small projects in the watershed. Currently, ten projects are underway - five on rangeland and five on agricultural land. The implementation activities fall under five different conservation areas. An individual landowner may participate in one or more of these activities, depending on his/her needs and location in the watershed. The five conservation areas are:

- upper watershed riparian restoration;
- upper watershed rangeland restoration;
- construction of tailwater ponds;
- revegetation of irrigation canals and drainage ditches; and
- lower watershed slough restoration.

For additional information contact Judy Boshoven, Watershed Coordinator, at 530/662-2037.

Continued Discussion: How Can CALFED Assist with Environmental Justice and Urban Issues?

Arlene Wong from the Pacific Institute, a policy research organization in Oakland, introduced herself to the meeting participants. She explained that she and other environmental justice representatives met with CALFED staff earlier in the day to discuss how environmental justice issues can fit under the CALFED umbrella. Ms. Wong asked the Work Group to engage in a discussion to address the following questions:

- How can the Work Group help with environmental justice efforts?
- What can environmental justice groups bring to the Work Group?
- Together, how can we make the Watershed Program more effective?

A discussion regarding these questions began at a Work Group meeting in Oakland last November where several urban watershed groups gave presentations on environmental justice issues.

Discussion

A meeting participant suggested that an example of an environmental justice issue be included in the watershed brochure that will be developed by CALFED and the Resources Agency. Another meeting attendee concurred with this comment and recommended that a specific example be used from an urban setting in the Bay area.

A Work Group member commented that the Watershed Program should not be the only point of entry for environmental justice issues. This topic needs to be embraced by CALFED as a whole. Another meeting participant suggested that the CALFED solution principles be reviewed to see how environmental justice fits into those concepts.

A meeting attendee suggested that an environmental justice component be included in the Watershed Program principles. This comment was also raised at the November Work Group meeting.

A meeting participant stated that although the Work Group has been discussing using a watershed approach to problem solving by involving the community, oftentimes environmental justice issues are not included in this process. This approach needs to be improved. Impacts to a community need to be examined.

The discussion was wrapped up with a commitment that the Work Group would continue to work with environmental justice groups to ensure they fit under the CALFED umbrella. Some progress is being made. For example, Torri Estrada of the Urban habitat Program has been appointed as a BDAC member.

Planning for Future Work Group Meetings

A tentative schedule for future Work Group meetings was announced as follows:

- April meeting in Los Angeles (date not known)
- Friday, May 19 in Sonoma
- Friday, June 16 in Redding area
- Friday, July 21 in San Joaquin Valley

Update: *There will not be an April Work Group meeting. The next meeting will be held in Sonoma on Friday, May 19, from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.*

Meeting Participants

Name	Affiliation
Allen, Bob	Burney Forest Power
Barris, Lynn	Sacramento River Watershed Program Resource Center
Bolland, David	Association of California Water Agencies
Boshoven, Judy	Union School Slough Watershed Improvement Program
Bowker, Dennis	Sacramento River Watershed Program
Bradt, Josh	Urban Creeks Council
Carrico, Loretta	Cottonwood Creek Watershed Group
Chadima, Carole	MYRACL
Cooper Carter, Kristin	CA State University Chico
Cornelius, James	Calaveras County Water District
Coulter, Ken	State Water Resources Control Board
Crooks, Bill	City of Sacramento
Dawley, Vicky	Tehama County Resource Conservation District
Denzler, Sara	CA Department of Water Resources - Urban Streams
Drake, Nettie	Panoche/Silver Creek CRMP
Estrada, Torri	Urban Habitat Program
Everts, Conner	Southern California Watershed Alliance
Faulkner, Steve	Nevada County Sanitation District
Fitch, Steve	Office of Assembly Member Dickerson
Gordon, Nina	CA Resources Agency
Guzman, Martha	UFW
Harthorn, Allen	Sacramento River Watershed Program
Heiman, Dennis	Regional Water Quality Control Board - Redding
Holcomb, Diane	CALFED Bay-Delta Program
Jerauld, Frank	Amador Resource Conservation Districts
Knecht, Mary Lee	Watershed Program Team/Jones & Stokes
Lavelle, Jane	City of San Jose
Lowrie, John	CALFED Bay-Delta Program
Lowrey, Jan	Cache Creek Conservancy
Meacher, Robert	Plumas County Supervisor, BDAC Member, RCRC
Nakamura, Gary	Shasta-Tehama Bioregional Council
Olsen, Jenna	Tuolumne River Preservation Trust
Perrone, Michael	State Water Resources Control Board
Reed, Rhonda	CA Department of Fish and Game
Sime, Fraser	CA Department of Water Resources - Red Bluff
Smith, Lynda	Metropolitan Water District
Toline, Anna	Bureau of Reclamation
Troyon, Jerry	Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District
Tupper, Julie	U.S. Forest Service
Voege, Hal	Communication Consultant
Ward, Kevin	UC Davis Information Center for the Environment
Whiten, Joyce	Office of Planning and Research
Wills, Leah	Plumas Corporation
Wong, Arlene	Pacific Institute
Wright, Cary	Sweetwater Authority
Zimny, Chris	CA Department of Forestry

Meeting Handouts

- ✓ Meeting Agenda
- ✓ Assembly Bill 1948
- ✓ Assembly Bill 2117
- ✓ List of BDAC Watershed Work Group Meeting Participants
- ✓ Union School Slough Watershed Improvement Program Description
- ✓ Cache Creek Conservancy Newsletter
- ✓ Variety of CALFED's Public Outreach Brochures, Newsletter, and Video